# The True Northerner.

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### THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

One day in the early autumn
Of a bright and happy year,
I wandered away to the homestead,
To the homestead old and dear;
A ruin it stood before me—
A ruin, with moss o'ergrown,
With the door on broken hinges,
And falling chimney stone.

As I wander'd around and around it,
And in, through each dusty room,
With only the lonely echoes
Of my feet a-through the gloom,
I thought how they sometimes told me
That away from the shining shore,
The dead come back to the silence
To the homes they have loved before.

And I said, does he—the master,
The father, who loved so well
The homestead amid the meadows,
The brook in the winding dell—
Does he ever come to the silence
Of the night's clear, starry hours,
With his voice of silvery laughter
Through the tangled weeds and flowers?

Does he come, I asked, in the twilight—
Does he come to the open door,
And sit in the peach-tree's shadow
As he sat in the days of yore?
And over the foot-worn pathway
Does he go to the wicket gate,
And stand and wait for the children
As he used to stand and wait?

Does he look adown the roadside,
And under the shadowy oaks,
And hear the lake-waves murmur,
And the oarsman's gentle strokes,
'Till he sees the children's faces
So bright, and young, and fair,
With the moonlight's golden brightness
On the black and the auburn hair?

And when, with their gleeful singing,
They follow him through the gate,
To the hearthstone, where the mother
Doth patiently watch and wait—
Does he—as he used to say it—
With a face so cheery and bright,
"Bless God, oh mother, our darlings,
Our children are safe to-night!"

Is it thus that he sees he homestead,
In the beauty of early years?
Or it's mildew, and blight, and ruin,
And the children's struggles and tears?
Does he come in the purple gloaming,
And wander through chamber and hall,
And yearn for the dear old faces,
And the love that brightened all?

—*Fidelia W. Gillette.*

### WHAT A KEY UNLOCKED.

They were as handsome a couple as one would have wished; indeed, many persons who knew them both intimately, said that Mr. and Mrs. Vivian were samples of what true marriage ought to be.

On this bitingly cold January morning they were standing in the elegant library of their residence in New York, numerous evidences of æsthetic tastes surrounding them on all sides; yet, to have looked into their faces, it needed only a glance to tell you of deep abiding trouble.

She was a beautiful woman, this peerless Ethel Vivian, with a grave dignity about her that was perfection; with a rare, refined face, lighted by winsome, violet blue eyes, framing the clear, pure complexion, pale cheeks and glowing scarlet mouth, with masses of pale, dead gold hair that had made her husband so madly in love only two years before. Now, two years, after one year of perfect happiness, when Ethel would tell her husband such bliss so unalloyed could not last much longer, after six months more of vague suspicion, founded on the most shadowy foundation; then, after the last six months of gradual, then rapid distrust, jealousy, anger—it had all come to this horrible open rupture. And on that beautiful winter morning Ethel Vivian and her husband had met in the library of their home for the last time as man and wife.

And the ponderous document lying on the table where the two had so often read together, was a bill of divorce.

Yes, it had come to that—open separation—and all because—why!

Ethel Vivian could have told you of Laura St. John's wondrous face; she could have drawn you a picture of her with such perfection of accuracy, that you would hardly need to see her. And this is how Ethel would have described the woman who lay at the bottom of her life-long misery.

A face, witching as a Venus, with such a dainty, scarlet mouth, with the tiny, seed-pearl teeth peeping between her lips, just as the little dimple was called to her scarlet-tinted cheeks by the laugh that so often came.

Her eyes laughed, too—those sunshiny eyes, that sparkled as though they were varnished; wondrous eyes of amber red, with such magnificent red gold lashes, that lay like a heavy shadow on her cheek; perfect arched brows, and hair that seemed a fairy gift, so perfect it was in texture, color and grace.

Sometimes when she wore it hanging, unbound and unbraided, just as nature had waved it, from the crown of her little, royally set head, to far below her waist, you would have taken Laura St. John for a sprite uncanny gnome, Ethe said; a nymph of rarest beauty, goodness and innocence.

Even after Edward Vivian learned how deceitful, how utterly unprincipled she was, he forgave it her, because it was himself she loved. So now that this beautiful demoness had so worked her plans that Edward Vivian was oftener by her side of an evening than at his wife's—now that Ethel had freely come to learn that she was no longer necessary to her husband's happiness, she had requested him to let her go away; let him be freed legally from the bonds that had grown so galling. Now, there the two stood face to face, to coldly say good-bye. Ethel was deadly white as she took the pen her husband courteously handed her, to sign her name to that which, once signed, unwifed her forever. But was it not better thus? Had she a right to stay where she felt her presence was a burden—where she knew she was merely tolerated?

Then rushing memories of the days when she came there in the flood-tide of happiness came surging over her sore heart; she trembled violently; her cold fingers refused to clasp the pen; and, with one swift, piteous look up in her husband's face, Ethel bowed her head over the divorce bill and wept as only such a woman could weep at such a time.

Mr. Vivian looked amazed, then surprised; then a sudden grave expression came into his eyes. He turned away from her, and began to promenade to and fro, walking with quick, restless strides, the while flinging quick glances at the glorious head bowed in such mute agony on the table before him. Then half reluctantly, half angrily, he paused beside her.

"I am so astonished, Mrs. Vivian; I had not expected anything of this kind. I presumed you had arrived at your deliberate decision, and that thenceforth the past was only the past; the future—'

She raised her white face, with its aunting eyes.

"Oh, the future! The awful midnight, trackless, endless future that looms before me! Edward! Edward! this will kill me!"

She was trying to speak calmly; she sat folding and unfolding her nervous, chilly hands; but in her very attitude, her vain efforts at courage, was a dumb despair that touched his heart.

"Ethel"—he had not called her Ethel for so long before, that it thrilled her to her very soul to hear it once more—"there was no actual need for this," and he lightly touched the document. "It was at your own request I had it procured."

A little wailing cry interrupted him.

"I know, I know," she moaned; I wanted you to do this; I want it still, because you love me no longer; because you love Laura St.—"

"Mrs. Vivian."

He was stern and icy again; she knew by the curt, sharp way he interrupted her.

"This is not the first time you have openly accused me of infidelity to you and loyalty to Miss St. John. Cannot a man express admiration for a beautiful woman without a jealous wife using it as a weapon to destroy her own happiness? Miss St. John would be insulted beyond measure did she for a moment suppose—"

"What?"

It was a siren voice that startled them both; and then Laura St. John, herself, radiant in daintiest blue velvet and miniver costume, came laughing in, so sweet, so arch.

"My dear Mrs. Vivian, I am so delighted to—why—"

For Ethel had arisen, cold and still, with no welcome on her white face, and only reproachful sorrow in her eyes.

"Miss St. John has no reason to be delighted to see the woman whose life she has blasted—whose husband she has tempted."

Ethel spoke very deliberately, looked Laura full in the face; then she turned to her husband, in whose eyes there shone a red gleam that portended wrath.

"Perhaps you will assure your friend she is in the way just now," she said, "I have only a quarter of an hour to attend to our business."

And then Ethel consulted her watch with an air of quiet; but oh, how, under that cold exterior, were her pulses leaping, bounding!

Laura stood motionless, with an ungloved hand resting on the library table, her scarlet lips trembling as if her heart was broken—her big, resplendent eyes slowly filling with tears as she looked first at Ethel, then Mr. Vivian, as if to humbly beseech him to tell her what it all meant. She was very beautiful at that moment, and she thought Edward Vivian appreciated it to the full; she knew it when he turned toward her.

"I am sure you will pardon us, dear Miss St. John," he said. "At this moment Mrs. Vivian is particularly engaged."

Laura shot him a glance from her liquid eyes.

"But I must come again and find out what she means. I must know why I am thus accused."

But her mission was accomplished; and, with a thrill of gratification at her heart, she bowed to Ethel and gracefully departed. And Ethel Vivian, with icy-gleaming eyes, compressed lip and unfaltering hand, now signed her name in full under her husband's.

And so it was done—or undone.

* * * * *

Two years—twice a twelvemonth—and Laura St. John was standing before her dressing-table, earnestly peering at the splendid reflection she made, with her personal beauty heightened by the chastely-rare bridal attire she wore, that was faultless from the floating tulle veil, fastened by an orange-blossom spray and a glittering diamond aigrette, to the tiny, white silken slipper, with its rosette scintillating with small jewels. She was beautiful, she was triumphant, for she was successful; and this, her wedding day, would crown her success.

She managed well; according to the chart she had drawn for herself, from the hour she first saw and loved Ethel's husband, she had marched straight on, regardless of cost, regardless of anything but the ultimate result.

Here it was, close at hand—not half an hour from accomplishment.

Down in the saloon Laura heard low, musical laughter at intervals; in the several dressing-rooms opposite she heard the wedding guests preparing to descend to the festivities, and she smiled at her own eyes in the glass, that at last she would marry Ethel's husband.

And Ethel?

She had dropped suddenly from the social firmament. Like a meteor that comes flashing in dazzling light across the sky, and then plunges into black deeps of obscurity, so had Ethel dazzled, delighted and disappointed the people. Now, after two years, she was to them as if she had never been.

To Edward Vivian, if memories of her haunting eyes and quivering lips ever came, he never gave a sign, but deliberately wooed and won Laura St. John.

Laura St. John herself? In the desert silence of her chamber, as she stood drawing on her gloves—for, with a pretty wilfulness that was irresistible, she had driven her maids from her—a graceful, ebon-robed woman suddenly, silently, swiftly glided across the glaring carpet and confronted her, with upraised veil, and cold, clear eyes.

"It is even I, Miss St. John. Surely you will not despise my congratulations?"

Ethel's sweet, low voice it was, and Laura, after one slight start of great surprise, bowed constrainedly, and waited.

"I will not detain you more than a moment, as Mr. Vivian, doubtless, is impatient for the moment when he may call you his wife. Under the peculiar circumstances, Miss St. John, and to assure you that I bear you no malice, may I present you with this?"

She quietly reached out a small rosewood box that was mounted with silver.

"The key is in the lock, you see, Miss St. John. Have I the pleasure of knowing you accept it?"

Ethel sat the box on the marble bureau-top, and then awaited an answer.

Laura's cheeks were flushing slightly; her hands trembled as she essayed to button her glove, and busy thoughts were speeding through her brain.

What did it mean, this sudden appearance of Ethel? Did it anger ill or peace as Ethel declared? Dared this stately, calm woman in black attack her there alone, and wreak a discarded wife's just vengeance? The thought was natural, and Laura's heart beat in tempestuous throbs.

"I will accept it, Miss Elmore, and thank you. And may I beg that you will allow me to finish my toilettte? I would not care to be too late."

This, with a wonder in her heart if Ethel observed her cowardice.

But Mrs. Ethel—Miss Elmore the law called her—smiled.

"Assuredly I would not have you too late. I dislike those words, too late. To the superstitions they sound ominous. Adieu, Miss St. John; you will be detained no longer by me, or you might possibly be too late."

She bowed regally, and left Laura shivering with vague unrest at the repeated words. A moment later and from her window she saw Ethel going rapidly down the street, her black veil fluttering like a death penant in the brisk breeze.

She drew a long breath of relief, and then turned to the beautiful little rosewood box with a joyous laugh.

"Natural curiosity tempts me to see what her present can be. Possibly some horrid snake bracelet, or a dagger for my shawl, or something equally delightful."

She lightly turned the little silver key, and bent her radiant face over the lid. She saw a tiny, vaporous smoke wreath roll upward for an instant, and then—

The terrible noise of the explosion brought the horrified guests to her door, and they found her lying in her burial robes, fresh in her goodness-like beauty, dead.

On the pink velvet carpet, her eyes fixed in a stare that was frozen horror, Edward Vivian bent over her, and knew for a surety what had wrought it, though no lip then, or afterward, ever uttered a name in connection with the diabolical engine whose silver key had unlocked the portals of death's domains to Laura St. John.

### Hanging an Elephant.

The hanging of an elephant is a feat so very rare that it is worth mention when it occurs. At Hamburg, the keepers of the Zoo thought that it would be more economical to give the elephant a stone floor as the wooden one had to be replaced too often. One was laid, but the elephant would not lie down upon it to sleep. Something told him that if he did he could not get up again. Hence he slept standing, or leaning against the wall. But the other night his feet slipped when dozing and he came down. He could not get up in fact, and twenty men with ropes, pulleys, and ingenious contrivances, worked all day trying to get him up. He was finally raised until his feet were four inches above the floor when the hinder ropes broke, leaving the poor beast hanging by the neck. He gave one piteous roar and was a dead elephant.

He Was the One.—Seven or eight boys were rushing around the postoffice Saturday, headed by a yellow-haired youth who was saying:

"All I want in this world is to lay my hands on him!"

He presently came upon a boy weighing about ten pounds more than himself, and rushing at him he exclaimed:

"Did you lick my brother Ben?"

"Yes, I did," replied the boy, dropping his bundle and spitting on his hands.

"Well," continued the other lad, backing slowly away, "he needs a licking once a week to teach him to be civil!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

The Stature of Primitive Man.—The indications are that the primeval man of Europe and his nearer descendants were of short stature. The popular notion that the present generation is physically weaker and smaller than the primitive or ancient is not only utterly unfounded, but there is abundant evidence that the reverse is true. Most of us would be amazed if not shocked at a true and life-sized portrait of the real Eve, "mother of all living." We often hear, indeed, of giants' bones here and there dug up, but intelligent examination invariably proves them to have belonged to the mammoth or other animal.

### The History of Zero.

"Zero," on the common thermometer, like the fanciful names of the constellations, is a curious instance of the way wise men's errors are made immortal by becoming popular. It may be worth while to say that the word itself (zero) comes to us through the Spanish from the Arabic, and means empty, hence nothing. In expressions like "90 deg. Fahr.," the abbreviation, Fahr., stands for Fahrenheit, a Prussian merchant of Dantzic, on the shores of the Baltic Sea. His full name was Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit.

From a boy he was a close observer of nature, and when only nineteen years old, in the remarkably cold winter of 1709, he experimented by putting snow and salt together, and noticed that it produced a degree of cold equal to the coldest day of that year. As that day was the coldest that the oldest inhabitant could remember, Gabriel was the more struck with the coincidence of his little scientific discovery, and hastily concluded that he had found the lowest degree of temperature known in the world, either natural or artificial. He called that degree zero, and constructed a thermometer, or a rude weather glass, with a scale graduated up from the zero to a boiling-point, which he numbered 212, and the freezing-point thirty-two. Because, as he thought, mercury contracted the thirty-second of its volume on being cooled down from the temperature of freezing water to zero; and expanded 180th on being heated from the freezing to the boiling point.

Time showed that this arrangement, instead of being truly scientific, was as arbitrary as the division of the Bible into verses and chapters, and that these two points no more represented the real extremes of temperature, than "from Dan to Beersheba" expressed the exact extremes of Palestine.

But Farenheit's thermometer had been largely adopted, with its inconvenient scale; and none thought of any better until his name became an authority, for Fahrenheit finally abandoned trade and gave himself to science. Then habit made people cling to the established scale, as habit makes the English cling to their old system of cumbrous fractional money.

Our nation began to use Fahrenheit's thermometer about the middle of the last century, or not far from the time when Old Style was exchanged for New Style in the writing of dates.

The three countries which use Fahrenheit are Holland, England and America. Russia and Germany use Reaumer's thermometer, in which the boiling point is counted 80 degrees above freezing point. France uses the centrigrade thermometer, so called because it marks the boiling point 100 degrees from freezing point.

On many accounts the centigrade system is the best, and the triumph of convenience will be attained, when zero is made the freezing point, and when the boiling point is put 100 or 1,000 degrees from it, and all the subdivisions are fixed decimally.

If Fahrenheit had done this at first, or even if he had made it one of his many improvements, after the public adopted his error, the luck of opportunity, which was really his, would have secured to his invention the patronage of the world.—*North Christian Advocate.*

### A Perplexed Duellist.

The most notorious of living duellists is just now under a cloud, and the worst of it for him is that he cannot, as usual, get into the sunshine again by killing or wounding somebody. A certain Madame Olga in Paris recently sent around to the office of the *Pays* newspaper a notice of a concert, which notice failed to appear in the journal named. A friend of Madame Olga called on the editor of the *Pays*, M. Paul Cassagnac, and asked the reason of this neglect. M. Cassagnac, the editor, responded curtly, and supplemented his response by a reflection upon the character of the lady interested. Madame Olga, hearing of this scandalous aspersion, failed to throw herself into the Seine, or adopt any of the modes of self-destruction popular with despairing women in the French capital. She took quite a different course. In short, Madame Olga dressed herself in man's attire, purchased a small cane, and went upon the war-path. She found that famous duellist and editor, M. Paul Cassagnac, sipping his absinthe grandly in the fashionable Cafe de la Pais, and addressed him briefly but pointedly in the way a furious woman talks. Then the little cane in Madame Olga's hand cut the air and curled about M. Cassagnac's back, then across the face, and then the gentle creature left the room. The duellist is enraged, but, apparently, without resort. He cannot call a woman out and shoot her; he cannot pink her with his sword, which is for men alone. It is a distressing situation for the editor of the *Pays*, and his Frenchman's wit will be tested in devising a revenge.

### The German Troops.

The *Almanach de Gotha* states that the military forces, including those of Bavaria, comprise at this moment 31,830 officers, 1,329,000 men, 314,970 horses, 2,700 field and 820 siege pieces of cannon. They are subdivided as follows: Staffs and their suites, 17,000 men; infantry and chasseurs, 107,000; field artillery, 109,500; foot artillery, 61,700; engineers and railway corps, 40,900; train men, 46,800; administration service, 8,800. Moreover, an order of mobilization can bring under arms the following: 578,340 infantry soldiers, 67,580 cavalry, 51,090 field artillery, 13,120 engineers—total, 710,130, without counting the staffs, their suites, baggage trains, etc. In these figures the four battalions which Germany proposes to form are not included. These last will be composed of 3,400 officers and 152,000 soldiers, to which must be added 234 battalions of the new landstrum, 17 regiments of cavalry of the same, besides 31 companies of chasseurs, consisting of at least 3,718 officers and 202,500 men; total, 38,948 officers, 1,684,200 men, and about 332,000 horses. The above estimate takes no account of the numerous staff of the ambulances, nor of individuals susceptible of being called out by virtue of the law of 1813, who would increase the German armies by at least 335,000 men.

### A Terrific Problem.

A recent number of a scientific journal, speaking of the relative proportion of the sexes in the human race, declares that for every one hundred and fifty men that come into the world, one hundred and seventy-two one-hundredths (100 72-100) women are born. I do not dispute these figures. I only ask for light. It appears, according to this, that there are some women who are only seventy-two one-hundredths of a woman. What the remaining twenty-eight one-hundredths are I cannot imagine.

Now, what I want to know is this: If a woman of this kind marries a one-hundredth man and has a daughter, will the daughter be an eighty-four one-hundredths woman, or a ninety-six one-hundredths woman? And what will be the exact relationship between such a daughter and a seventy-six one-hundredths aunt and her eighty-seven one-hundredths daughters, especially if the eighty-seven one-hundredths girls marry the brothers of the ninety-six one-hundred girl, and so become not only her ninety-eight one-hundredth first cousins, but also her ninety-five one-hundredth sisters-in-law, the aforesaid seventy-six one-hundredth aunt becoming also the eighty-nine one hundredths mother-in-law of her eighty-eight one-hundredth nephews, will the—the—. Let me see; where am I? It is an awful subject to grapple with. Oh yes! I say if the seventy-six one-hundredths aunt ——. But no. The question can't be solved in any such way as this. I give it up. The only way to get at it will be to do the sum in algebra somehow, make the daughter $x$, the aunt $y$, the first cousin $a$, and the mother-in-law $b$. Then, it seems to me, if you multiply the aunt by the daughter and divide the first cousin by the mother-in-law, in some way or other, or else extract the square root of the cousins and subtract the result from the aunt, keeping the daughter as a common denominator, and at the same time make a decimal fraction of the mother-in-law, perhaps the result might be satisfactory. But I am not certain. I am poor at mathematics. I wish the lightning-calculator would get at this, or that Professor Tyndall would subject it to chemical analysis.—*Max Adeler.*

### Reporting a Quaker Meeting.

Henry Bloodgood was young and innocent, and fresh from rural scenes when he first came to Philadelphia and began his career as a reporter on a morning newspaper. And so one Wednesday some of the reporters told Henry that there was going to be an important meeting at a certain Friends' meeting house, and perhaps he had better go up and make a full report of the proceedings. Henry Bloodgood was not at all familiar with the method of worship indulged in by Friends; so he got three or four quires of paper, and six lead pencils sharpened at both ends, and he went up to that meeting house, innocent as a lamb, and spread his paper out over his hat, and seized a lead pencil, and sat there in guileless simplicity waiting for the proceedings to proceed. It was a silent meeting that day, and Henry Bloodgood remained upon that bench for two long hours, getting more and more nervous every minute, and at last madder and madder. At the end of the second hour Mr. Bloodgood considered that he could stand it no longer; so he arose excitedly and went over to an aged Friend who sat on a bench with an exaggerated hat. The exasperated reporter seized him by the arm and exclaimed:

"See here, old man, when is this blamed thing going to commence?"

Two energetic Friends arose and gently led Henry to the portal, and he went home in sadness. His soul fills with gloom now whenever the Society of Friends is mentioned.—*Max Adeler in Danbury News.*

### Disgusted with Law.

Many a man who has lost a just suit in court will talk in strong terms about the uncertainty of law. But few have such a good reason for their distrust as Dr. Lyman Beecher. He used to tell the following incident with a flashing eye and strong emphasis, even in his old age:

He woke one night when a young man in college, and saw his clothes slowly disappearing through a broken pane in his window. His room was on the ground floor. Without hesitation he leaped from the bed, and opening the window, sprang out of it in his night-dress and gave chase. The frightened thief dropped the clothes, and thought only of escaping. But Beecher's blood was up, and he held on in the chase till he grabbed the thief by the collar. When the latter attempted to strike, he knocked him down and choked him till he begged for mercy. The thief then tried to get a knife out of his pocket, but Beecher took it away, and marched him back to college in triumph, and made him quiet on the floor till morning. Then he took him before a Justice, told the story with an honest pride at his own prowess, and waited to see the law do its duty. To his unspeakable disgust the Justice released the culprit because, in the chase, Beecher had lost sight of him once round a corner. Beecher was disgusted, and inclined to speak sarcastically of the technicalities of law after that experience.